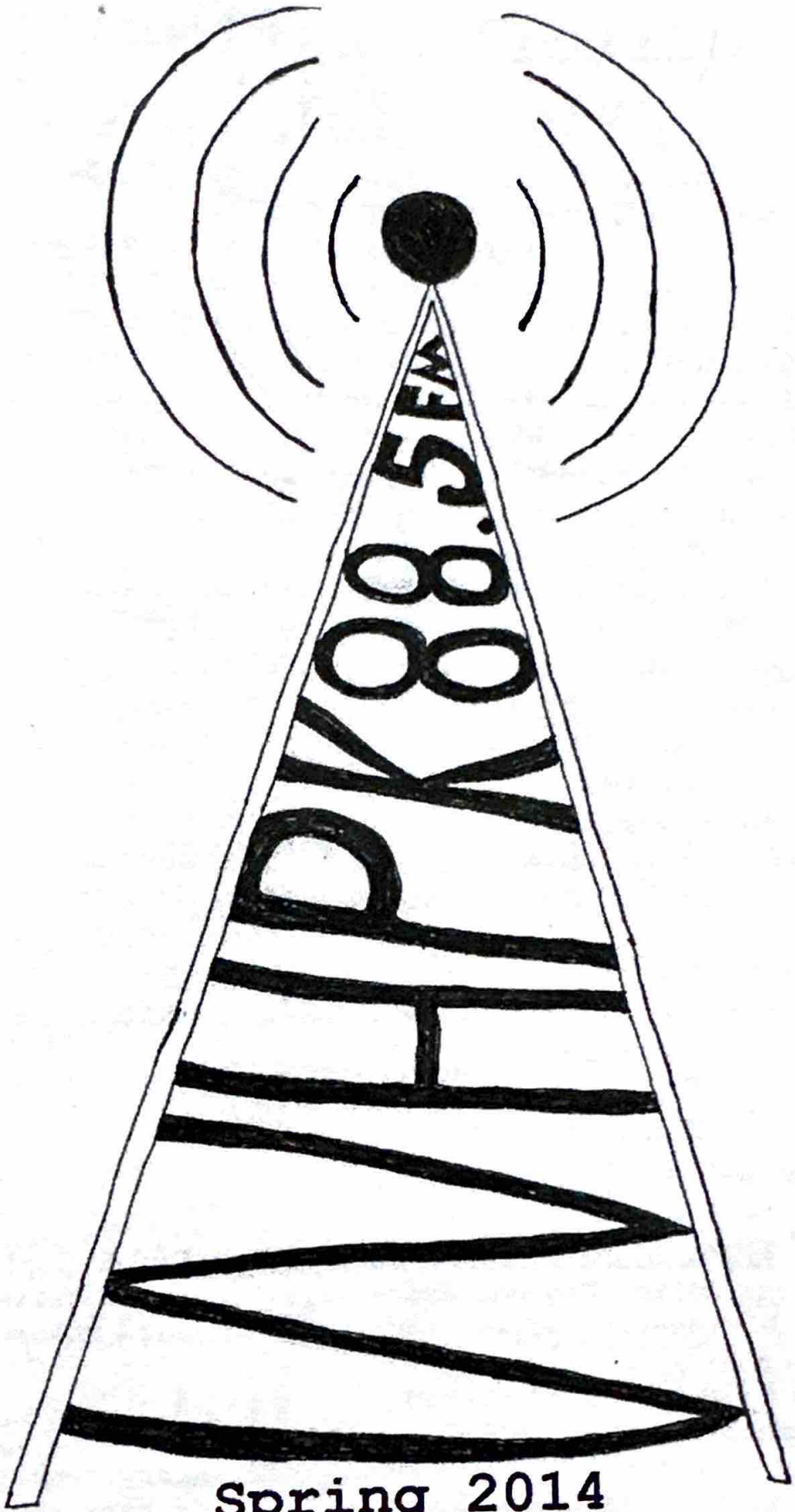

Spring 2014

Issue #2

Editor's Letter

A few weeks after the release of the first issue of the WHPK zine, I was working in Harper Café late one Thursday night when I spotted a copy of the zine lying on an adjacent table. Under the neogothic lettering of its header were some comments written in pencil, barely visible against the black cover: "(the WHPK zine) sucks...these pretentious hipsters are the least self-aware people on campus." As I was largely responsible for the creation of the offending publication, I couldn't help but feel somewhat unnerved; was this the image of WHPK the zine was projecting?

Whether this issue of the zine will necessarily rectify that perception is debatable, but we're quite excited about it nonetheless. Included in its forty(!) black-and-white pages are interviews with the up-and-coming Austrian band Bilderbuch and oddballs discovered on a CD found in the Reg by a band called Randy Herman and the Spectre of Benevolence, a feature on groups that use the English language as an aesthetic tool instead of a means of communication (see: ESL Punk), reviews of the newest additions to the storied WHPK Record Library, amongst many other odds and ends. Hang loose, hail satan, and enjoy the nice weather.

Juliet Eldred
Zine Queen

WHPK Zine Issue #2: Spring 2014
Contributors: Juliet Eldred, Andrew Fialkowski, Charlie Rock, Mike O'Flaherty, Dylan West, Simon Wiener, Chloe Yanny-Tillar
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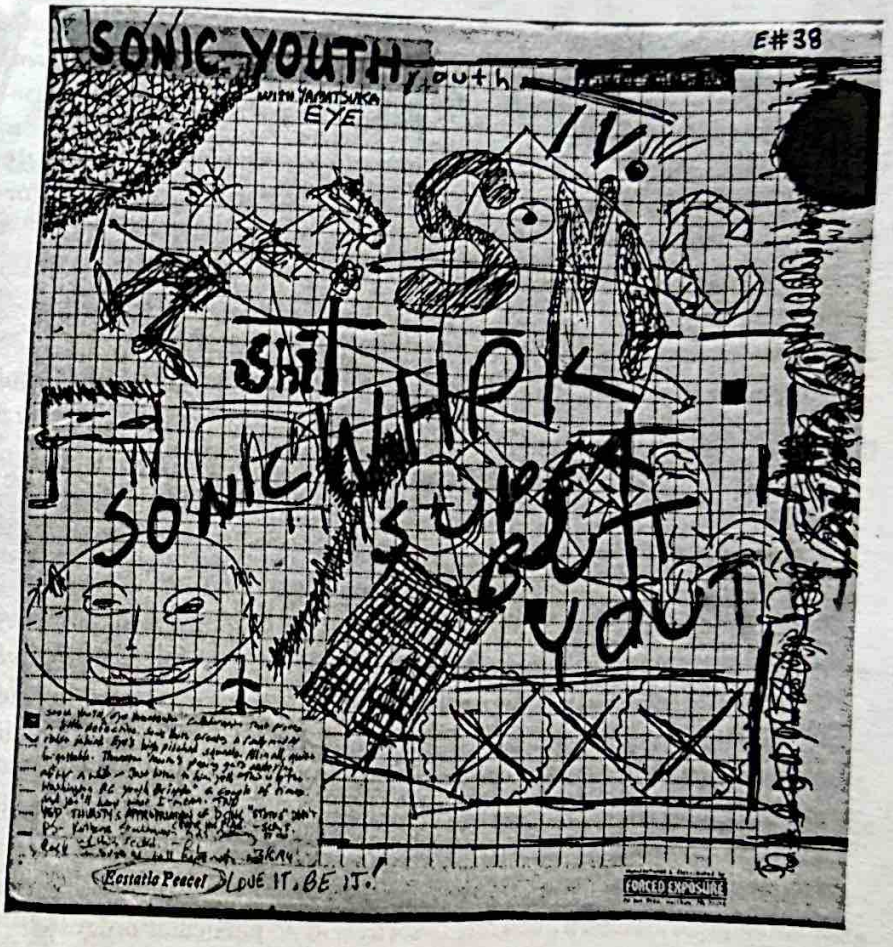
Whenever we put a new record in the WHPK library, the music directors - or any DJs with opinions - write their comments on the cover. These records, scanned by former station manager Simon Wiener, have some of the silliest and most amusing commentary the library has to offer. For more scans, visit whpkrecordlibrary.tumblr.com

BLACK FLAG - My War

"Henry's whining makes him sound like a three year old who, upon discovering that his tricycle is broken, wants everyone else's to be broken too."

SONIC YOUTH AND YAMATSUKA EYE—TV Shit

"Thurston Moore's posing gets annoying after a while—just listen to him yell 'This is the Washington D.C. youth brigade!' a couple of times and you'll know what I mean—JND"



I BEAT YOU:

Punk as a Second Language

by Mike O'Flaherty

As noted last issue, one of the primary accomplishments of the late '70s punk explosion was to dramatically lower the entry requirements for making effective rock and roll music. Performance experience, comprehension of basic Western melodic structures, even simple technical competence: all stood revealed as mere frivolous window-dressing, superfluous to the act of rocking. As punk spread beyond its initial Anglophone sphere (US, UK, the Antipodes), however, the development of a still-more-startling such breakthrough became clear: you didn't actually need to be able to speak English to sing punk rock songs. In English.

Indeed, in the topsy-turvy world of punk, partial or total illiteracy in the mother-tongue of Shakespeare, Dickens and Rotten proved a positive advantage. Divested of its effete function as mere meaning-conveyor, the English language stood revealed as a pure tactical assault-weapon of sound, its clusters of razor-syllabled gibberish pummeling the hapless listener senseless. After all, even if you can't understand a word in it, a big dictionary can attain a dandy second incarnation as a blunt instrument. Over the years, "E.S.L. Punk" has given discerning rock'n'roll epicures hours of demented listening pleasure. Here are a few favorites, in no particular order:

1. Vicious Vision, "I Beat You"

From Sweden and self-released in 1983, this snazzy item is one of the earlier examples of punk driven by drum-machine -- a really primitive and shoddy one in this case. It clatters along, tripping all over itself and nearly drowned out by the huge, pulsing sheets of guitar-fuzz up top. Meanwhile, the vocalist sneers out vague threats - "Listen to me while you fade away/You can't cause me no more delay" - in a voice dripping with aristo-thug *hauteur*, culminating in a chorus of "I'm gonna come on over and...beeeat you!" Later collected on the epochal *Killed By Death* comp, and hearable now on Youtube.

2. Antiseptic, *Drunk Punx Skate Core*

This is a US-release comp of work recorded by this Indonesian group between 1990 and 1998. They claim to have been the nation's first punk band, and I wouldn't doubt it; this stuff definitely exhibits the advantage of the distant pioneer/bricoleur, in this case blending GBH, Black Flag, and Agnostic Front-derived HC styles in ways that would've come off as anachronistic or peculiar in the more rigidly demarcated US and UK scenes. To these guys, it clearly all just partook of the same basic fury, and their take on it is a slampit-spinning attack of mid-tempo punk pugilistics.

Growing up under the iron-fisted police state of mass-murdering America-friendly dictator and golf aficionado General Suharto clearly wasn't a picnic for these guys, and the lyrics revolved around such subjects as public drunkenness, fistfights, and the need to defend the scene against assorted poser and assholes - points emphasized by shouted choruses of "You're just another fashion!" or "Hey man, we're Septic Crew!" The lead vocalist essays a garbled, guttural bark; when he had to take a hiatus in the wake of legal trouble, the guitar player stepped in temporarily; his voice is higher and thinner, but even more frenzied.

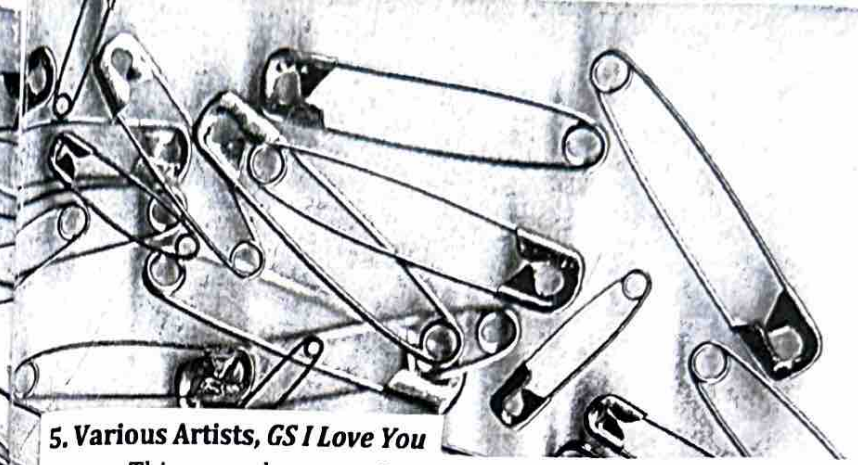
3. Little Bob Story, *Singles 1975-1976*

This is a recent reissue of the earliest, and best, work by this French group. Their visual focal points were male-model-good-looking Franco-Korean guitarist Guy-Georges Gremy and squat, square-built lead vocalist Roberto "Little Bob" Piazza (of Corsican stock, like Napoleon!) The music falls roughly into the "pub-rock" bracket of just-pre-punk back-to-basics rock and roll, but unlike many of those bands, there was nothing quaint about Little Bob Story: they actually rocked harder than most of the class-of-'77 punk, like an amphetamine-fueled *Back in the USA*-era MC5 blasting through the Chess Records catalogue.

While Gremy's razor-shard leads definitively demolished such standards as "Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood," Piazza let loose with coiled, manic babble that gobbled up the lyrics like Pac-Man and spat them out in a leather-lunged word salad. Their early album *High Time* is also eminently worth checking out, and there's an electrifying live clip (with video) on Youtube of the classic line-up ripping into "Little Big Boss."

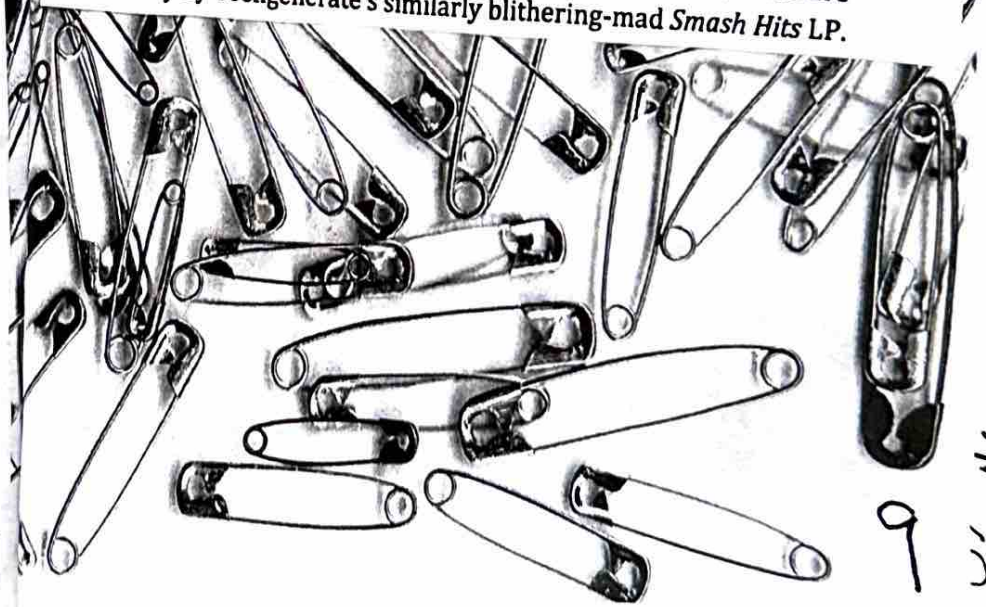
4. Traumatic, "Time is Gone"

A real mysterious item here - recorded, with a few other songs, in Italy in the very early '80s and released on cassette. Some of this material resurfaced on the *Punk Territory Vol. 4: Italian Hardcore* comp in 1995, and apparently inferior versions of some of the same songs appeared on LP a few years ago. There's almost no trace of this band on the internet, which is too bad - they were great. This isn't really hardcore at all, except in its generally grim, hard-nosed attitude. Italy at the turn of the decade was in transition from the late '70s "Years of Lead" with their intense political street-fighting and paramilitary violence to the harsh, enervating economic austerity of the '80s, and captured the spirit of the times quite well - the final song on the cassette is called "Last Kids from Nowhere." The music is a bleak, sparse mid-tempo grind, driven by serrated guitar; the singer sounds alternately ferocious and exhausted, his thick accent tearing the lyrics into cryptic political incantations like "Tomorrow, tomorrow belong...to...us!" (on "Cold City"). *Punk Territory Vol 4: Italian Hardcore* shows up at Reckless Records from time to time, and I heartily recommend you snap it up if you see it - after all, it also includes "Lazy Resistance" by the Crapping Dogs!



5. Various Artists, *GS I Love You*

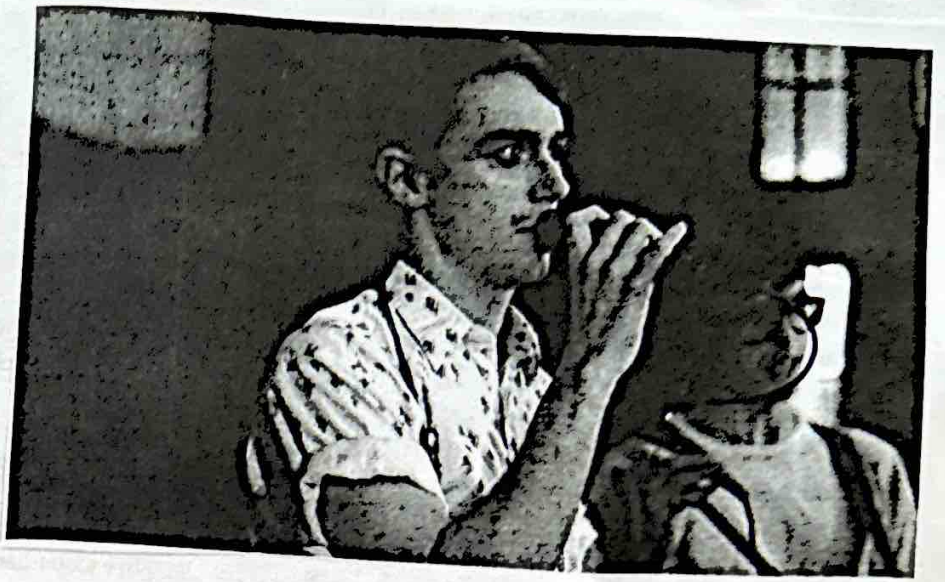
This comp showcases Japanese acts from the first, or proto-, era of punk, the mid to late '60s. But Japan's "group sounds" explosion had a crazed Year Zero edge to it that was every bit as out-there as later punk waves. Japan had little rock and roll action before then, and no experience of self-contained guitar groups, so there is a real making-it-up-as-we-go-along quality here. The second volume in the series, *GS I Love You Too*, features the tremendously accomplished work of the Tempters, which rivalled the Creation or Small Faces in quality, but this first one features the most crazed ravers. Especially the covers: the Burns' sped-up, flanged-out "I Saw Her Standing There," with vocals like a panic attack in an echo chamber; the Voltage's fuzz-drenched rumble through "Hold On I'm Comin'," wherein the singer gets practically tongue-tied in his histrionic efforts to channel the soul stylings of Sam and/or Dave; and the Swing West's ominously campy take on Arthur Brown's "Fire." In the annals of Japanese punk covers, these are rivaled only by Teengenerate's similarly blithering-mad *Smash Hits* LP.



The Lemons

Alpha Delt
4.19.14

Cosmic Brownies!



Richard Album

Photos By
Juliet
Eldred

Frankie Cosmos

Feline Spaceship:

Randy Herman and the Sceptre of Benevolence

by Dylan West

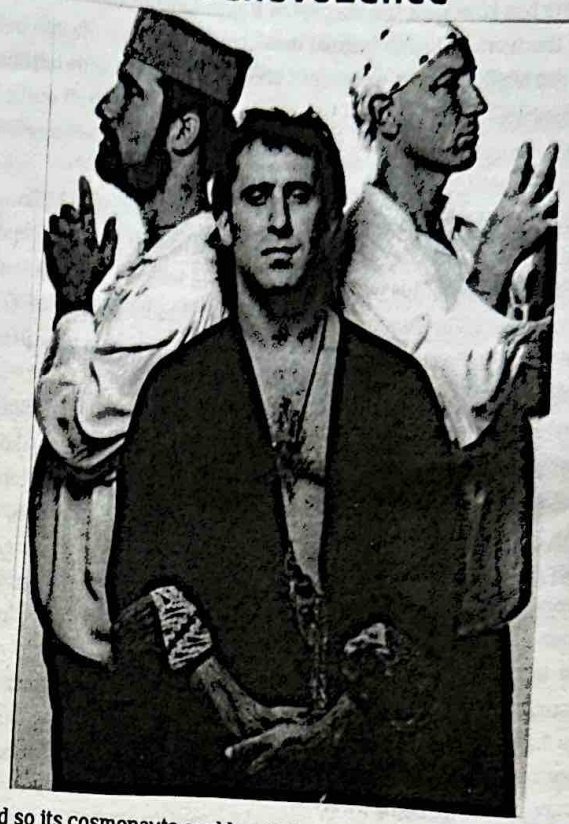
"Randy used to make up lyrics that were completely unprincipled. He liked to test to see if anybody was really listening. He turned to me one night and goes, 'Alright, Puff the Magic Dragon. Key of E. One, two, three.' And he started singing about the dragon going into therapy, and people were just nodding their heads. Randy loves to do that. He just loves to punk people. He can't help it. He couldn't quell the desire to shock people. He'd just smile and look really suave, and get away with it."

The real story begins with the founding of Oobleck Theater, an avant-garde democratic collective of idiosyncratic weirdos with ambitions to tinker with the premise of theatrical performance, an event which brought Randy Herman and Sceptre of Benevolence bassist Ted Moniak together for the first time in Chicago. From the jump these guys – consummate musical professionals on the stilted but lucrative piano-bar, cruise-ship, & wedding-band circuit – had in their eyes romance in the most cosmic sense, seeking the venue to jump, to scream at the top of their lungs, "What is with this universe thing?" What is with this universe thing?

The band's gigs, at best, were at greasy joints like the Lion's Den, under contracts that specified "Covers Only," crowd pleasers that'd drive drink sales. They were the kinda dive bars that sport flashing signs above the entryway, animated with a series of blinking neon frames of a cowboy tipping his hat to the entering clientele over and over. The nights Randy & the gang roll in, though, the cowboy's frames are all out of order, and the hat jumps around in the air, a Stetson possessed. A small detail that goes unnoticed by most of the bar crawlers, but the one whose eye it catches experiences a brief, existentially jarring moment of self-doubt before returning to the drink. On these nights the cowboy dances an unusual jig because Randy doesn't want to play Covers Only. He wants to jump around and scream his own cosmic questions at the audience. And they drink just the same.

"We had an alter ego band we called The Cookerboyz. We played New Orleans R&B, which Ted was turning us onto. We explored the grooves, the feel. We would go out and play regularly at places like Dick's Last Resort on a weeknight. Everyone would make a hundred bucks and get drunk. It made us a good band." The story of Randy Herman is the story of Billy Joel's piano man coming down off mescaline & wanting to get out of this place (Ted's words, not mine). It's the story of a naïve jobbing musician with pataphysical aspirations. And at its heart, it's the story of a man and his stoned cat.

Randy was a songwriting anachronism stuck in the Kenneth Cole & Haan wingtips & penny loafers of professional musicianship when he got stoned with his cat and bashfully gave birth to the Sceptre of Benevolence, and Ted & drummer Jeff Sandler gave 'em unconstrained life before tiny yet hyperreceptive crowds of shamans and spaced-out college kids (and the overlap thereof) above the flat Midwest bottom-out of American culture where the *Feline Spaceship* took its meandering flight, through a forgotten space in Chicago musical history *made something happen*, and then



crash-landed so its cosmonauts could, satisfied at the Great Joke they'd told, get back to their real careers.

To get their tales I tracked these cats down, now back to the life of straight pros one and all, and drew their narratives together. Ted was the one with the insight. Randy was the filterless Gonzo autobiographist with a thousand stories to tell. Jeff was the floor they stood on. And together aboard the *Feline Spaceship*, the band Sceptre of Benevolence (a no-pretentions-cock joke Randy didn't get until years after they settled on the name) produced an entirely but undeservedly forgotten album of questions and burned it onto a thousand CDs, one of which is now in the Regenstein Library's special collections (AudCD Bunnycake 1s, check it out sometime).

Ted's theatrical (should I say weirdo?) background surfaces in his role as Dr. Dweevedi of the All India College of Music and Medicine on the album's first and final tracks, two of the several improv'd alter-ego interludes that punctuate the album's songs. These two tracks provide a frame for the album, the opener containing the murmured instruction, "listen with an open mind and heart to the universal music of Randy Herman," revealing to the listener in New Age-pastiche terms a "so simple, yet so deeply spiritual" medicine to cleanse the chakras. What follows is just under an hour of auditory medicine that unquestionably cleanses the chakras.

I won't go too deep into the music. Executive summary: spazzy jazz-punk and zany psych mixed up with earnest college rock covers and weird interstitial pieces. I'm still not sure if it's actually good. Most people will not enjoy listening to the entire thing. To make it through, one has to accept the mythos of the Sceptre of Benevolence.
The songs are clearly the work of highly trained musicians, blending a diverse palette of sonic influence from Pat Metheny-esque free jazz stylings to David Byrne nuttiness (cranked up to Way Weirder) to early punk (Ted was involved with Detroit outfit Mr. Unique & the Leisure Suits in the late '70s). Lyrically, though, the album is a collection of odes to something SPIRITUALLY BIG.

The album is spotted with localized character studies, indicative of Randy's fascination with that which lurks below the surface of the stalwart and the banal. On track four, for instance, "Big Fat Sylvia," his rambling monologue tells the tale of a real-world Mother Teresa character he calls Queen of the World. Inspired by a Fullerton & Milwaukee diner waitress' endless compassion for the deeply troubled *little people* of the desperate all-night-diner world, the song stutters between bass-piano-drum interrobangs and keyless saxophone runs, ending with Randy shouting a promise to write the song and sing it for her. Sadly, by the time the band returned to make good on the promise, she had left to presumably pursue (presumably) bigger and better things. "She Looked Like An Insect" is a similarly autobiographical observation piece, the story of a beautiful dancer at a club nicknamed Milk of Burgundy, a "sort of avant-garde person" in Ted's words, probably a "challenging" person to anyone in the market for a "conventional human experience," who subtly spurned Randy's subtly lubricated romantic advances. In the song, a song of revenge of sorts, he proclaims her a praying mantis – no, *like* a praying mantis. And that distinction incites a gratingly drawn-out argument between Randy and Ted, ripped from an authentic on-stage argument, which gives the sense that neither of them had any idea at any point what they were shouting about. Just like the rest of the album.

A struggling two-bit musician in an altogether unremarkable place at an unremarkable time, songwriting consisted of late nights brooding alone over the keyboard, a plastic throne of ebony & ivory for his truest feline friend. That friend inspired the long, laid-back jam that forms the centerpiece of their second, less critically acclaimed LP, *Nonexistence* (I base "less critically acclaimed" on the assumption that I voice the lone opinion in the debate). "Get Stoned with Your Cat," this song is called, and it was recorded in a session with well-regarded yet provincial Chicago bluesman Carlos Johnson on guitar. The last real hit of Randy's college rock career, he croaks the following lyrics between Carlos's softly-face-melting blues licks and Ted's meow sound effects:

> "I can tell you from personal experience that you can key into the subtleties of interacting with this creature at a much, much deeper and more satisfying level. And for the record, the cat doesn't have to get stoned with you, because your cat is already stoned, man. And he's just hanging out in a magical feline kingdom, and when you get stoned with your cat, you can go there too, man."

This experience constitutes the genesis of *Feline Spaceship*. Neither outward-looking into the cosmos, nor truly introspective into the psyche, it is a piece drawn directly from Aura of Cat.
After Randy ditched the band at the end of the '90s, he went on a pilgrimage of self-discovery to Jerusalem where he trained to be a cantor. The cat came with – the Feline Spaceship cat, the Get Stoned With Your cat – but perished before long, departing its elderly flesh, spiraling to a space in the cosmos far closer to god than you or I will ever be.
Four days later, one of the countless strays that roam the Jerusalem streets followed him home. A week later, it jumped into his lap. It has been his companion ever since. These days it's inspiring him to write religious songs in the latest stage of his life, but he still has his eye on the fundamentally cosmic. The lead single off his recently released *Moving Through Time* is titled "King David's Spaceship."
Circle of life.

Continued on page 22 →

STOP
SMOKE
METH
HAIL
SATAN

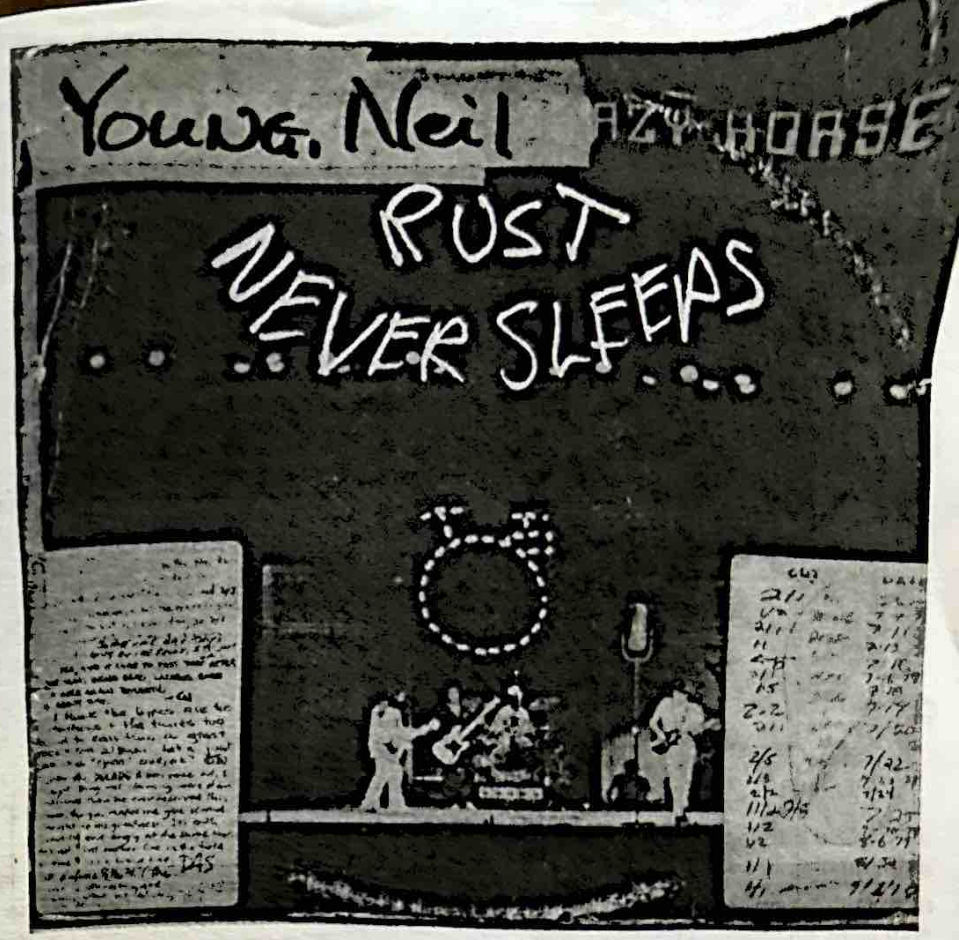
BE NICE
GET HIGH.
FUCK.
DESTROY.

PAPA
NEVER
Fuck
You!

COMP-Metalliska

"An idea so bad and there are no Def Leppard covers. Wanted Dead or Alive is okay. Man this is bad news!"

[Ed.'s note: Eric and I actually listened to this because we hate ourselves. Some things are so powerfully awful that the lived experience of confronting them cannot be anticipated in advance, or translated in the aftermath. Let me just say: the synth line from "The Final Countdown" was never meant for trumpet.]



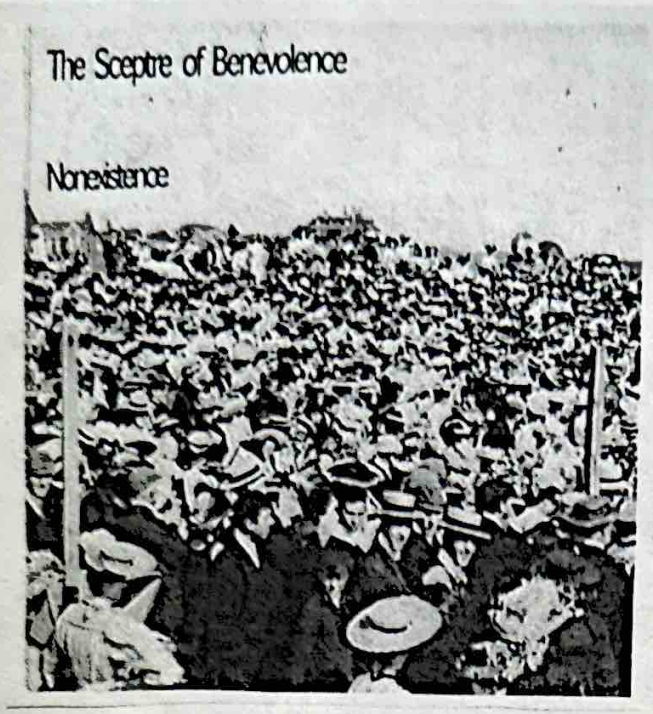
NEIL YOUNG AND CRAZY HORSE—"Rust Never Sleeps"

"Yea, and it came to pass that after eight years being dead, Lazarus rose and once again rocketh—KN"

"When the Decade album came out, I thought Young was claiming more of a influence than he ever deserved. This album, though, makes me give second thought to his greatness. It's both beautiful and angry at the same time. He's not 'just another line in the field of time.' He's a broad line.—DAS"

"An instant classic [...] the best he's ever done.—AL"

"Someone has this guy by the balls. It's just ok."



A couple cover songs, Camper Van Beethoven's "Take the Skinheads Bowling" and Boiled In Lead's "Microorganism," fit the themes pretty well. The former, Randy says, made the cut because it speaks of *confronting* unknowable evil, rather than ignoring or becoming a part of the titular skinheads, not with anger, but with bowling. The latter "felt right," he said. And it does, indeed, fill a vital niche on the album. For the questions on *Feline Spaceship* hit every scale of analysis, from the microbial level up to the domestic minutiae of the world of the cat/human, and finally to the spiritual, universal realm.

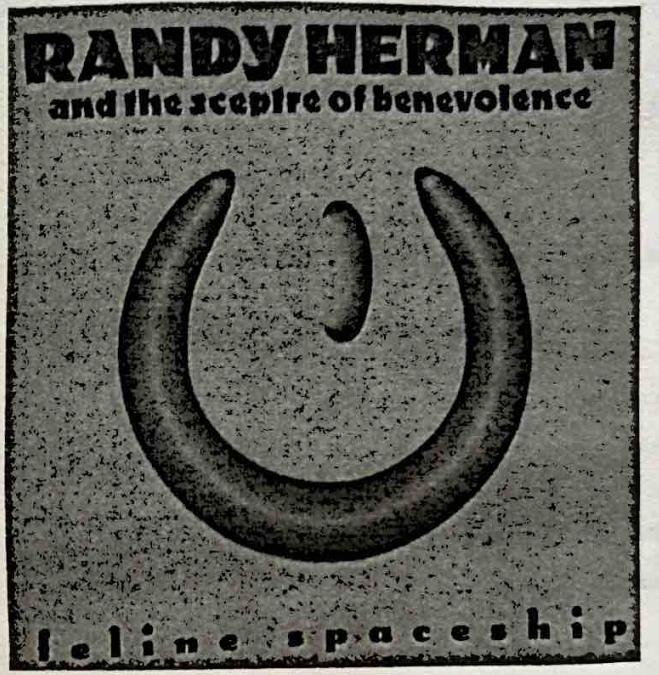
The first real Let's Jam moment of the album appears in "Cosmic Mom," the prototype for the Oedipal Rock subgenre if it ever existed and a resounding hit by any standard that probably essentializes whatever Concept a real critic would try to pull from the album's audiomélange. "Make love to me, Cosmic Mom" implores Herman over layered wails of background vocals. It's just another character study, but this time it's on a universal scale; one gets the sense that Big Fat Sylvia is the avatar of Cosmic Mom, the former a made-flesh expression and particular instantiation of the latter's love, care, and guardianship for all the universe's creatures.

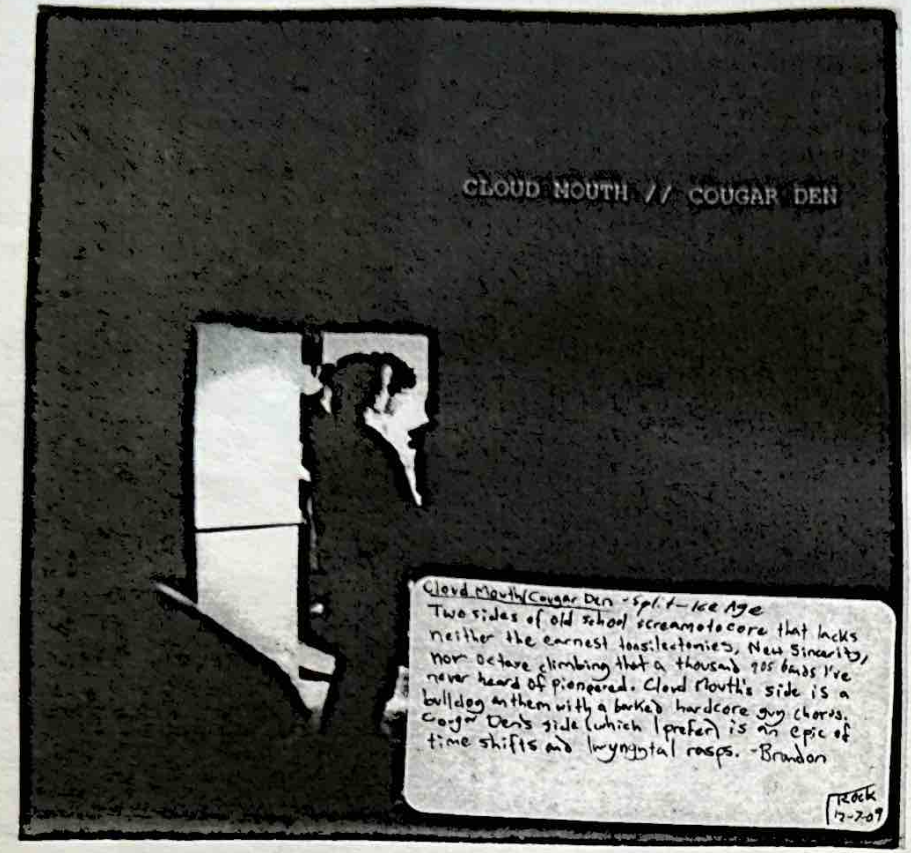
Probably the highlight hit, "Cosmic Mom" expresses a theological wisdom belied by the twin universal jam "What Is With This Universe Thing," whose verses, between staccato shouts of the song's title in the refrain and the extended Ornette Coleman-inspired instrumental segments, really key in on Randy's cat, the album's eponymous spaceshipborne feline drifting the starry sea. "What is with this universe thing?" he asks himself. He asks his band. He asks the bar crowd. No answer. So he asks his cat.

But we'll get back to the cat in a minute. First let's sit on this theological, universal wisdom point for a minute. When I brought up the question of the band's fans, Randy mused that they were never exactly destined for stardom. First, there was Dan Butler, a recent grad from Iowa City who just wanted to keep running his college radio station. With no other plans to follow, he moved in with Randy in his one-bedroom apartment in Chicago to manage the band, his mind totally blown by the first listen through *Feline Spaceship*. They rented a massive Winnebago and hit the road to tour Iowa, Michigan, and Illinois, at times with late Chicago outsider artist/legend Wesley Willis who featured on the track "I Never Met a Woman Like Salvador Allende" off the band's lone EP *Healthy Hair*. The band, Wesley Willis, and their fan Dan. That was it. But along the way, they picked up a handful of fanatics – those who *got* it. One in particular followed them around from town to town for a while, an Iowa local – he introduced himself as a shaman. The shaman of true Middle America. "He said something really beautiful to me once," Randy remembered. "He said, 'You guys are not going for small things. You guys are going for big, *huge* things.' And I said, 'Oh yeah, I guess we are.'"

Close, shaman. But in fact, they were going for the small things as well. They were going for everything.

"I think, in the end, the world wasn't ready for us. We were trying to do too much," Randy reflects, almost two decades removed from the *Feline Spaceship* sessions. "We were trying to storm the gates of heaven."



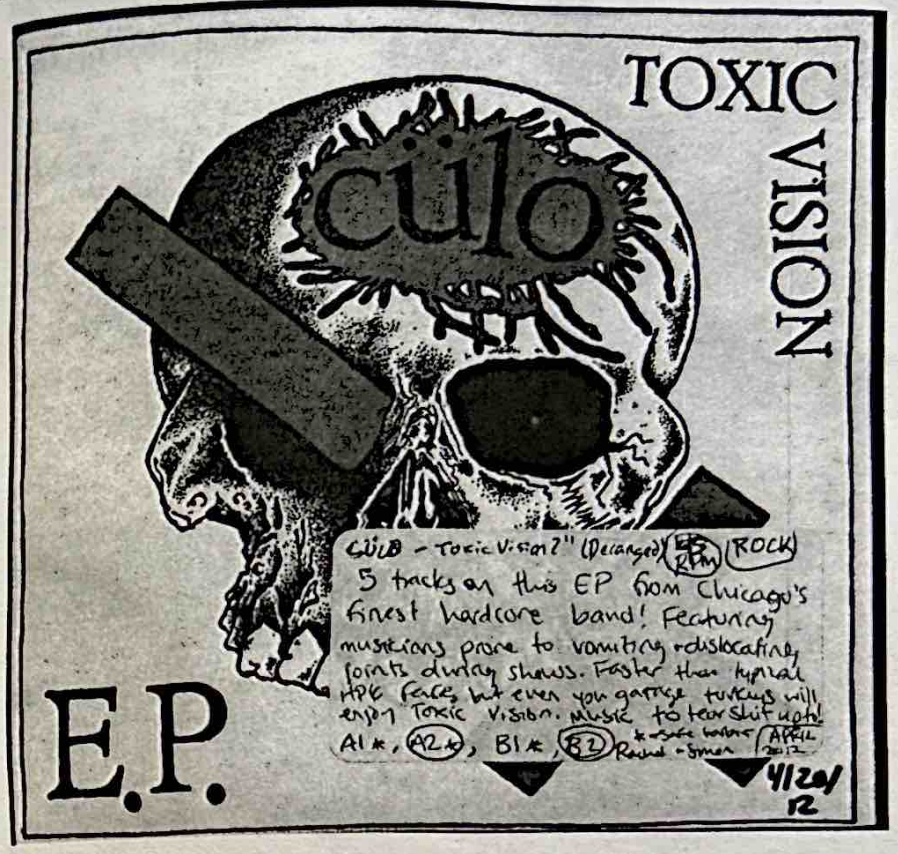


CLOUD MOUTH/COUGAR DEN—Split

"Two sides of old school screamotocore that lacks neither the earnest tonsilectomies, New Sincercity, nor octave climbing that a thousand 90's bands I've never heard of pioneered [...] an epic of time shifts and laryngytal rasps—Brandon"

CÜLO - Toxic Vision

"Faster than typical HPK fare, but even you garage turkeys will enjoy Toxic Vision."



Slurp's Up

The Malskys

¡Robert J. Zimmer!

The Rehival
Day 2
4.19.14

Photos by
Juliet Eldred

PROMISCUOUS FIGMENTS:

In Conversation with Bilderbuch

By **Chloe Yanny-Tillar**

I'm pretty much the worst at talking about music – whenever I get asked what music I listen to, it takes all my self-control not to groan dramatically, flop to the ground, and roll away. What comes out is usually a non-committal, "Oh, I dunno, plenty of mainstream indie rock and some obscure German music from my sister[1]." The first half is disappointing for both parties, but the latter half is more often than not met with some raised eyebrows and guttural tsks. Sometimes its because I seem like the pretentious asshole trying to impress with foreign underground rock bands they've never heard of, and rightly so. But sometimes it's accompanied by a derisive roll of the eyes as they incredulously ask "Why would you listen to German music?" All too often people treat my love for certain foreign bands as a quirky little novelty, like it's the punch line to a joke I just don't understand. It's dumb.

Bilderbuch is one of those bands met by my fellow Americans with skeptical looks. I started listening to Bilderbuch as a pretty casual listener, and it wasn't until my sister and I looked up videos of their live shows that I underwent the transition to full-on-fan. Charmed by their enthusiastic, borderline spastic antics[2], we began listening to more than just our ol'favs (Joghurt auf der Bluse, Kopf Ab, Discokugel, ya know) and experienced what is known by many as "being reborn."[3] By the time the band released Plansch over the summer,[4] we were totally hooked[5], and awaited anxiously for their new EP to be released. And now that it has[6], I'd love nothing more than to introduce them to all you lovely readers and create a strange, orotund Chicago cult following.

I suppose I ought to actually introduce the band before moving on to the intervie
Bilderbuch is a German-speaking band from Austria, currently making waves in the Germa
and Austrian music scenes. Originally forming when they were in high school together, the
band's been together for eight years, and is comprised of frontman, singer, and guitarist
Maurice Ernst, lead guitarist Michael Krammer, bass guitarist Peter Horažd'ovský, and
newbie Philipp Scheibl on the drums. As far as their music goes – I don't really know how t
explain it. German media is right: Greatness. Nonsense. Sexiness. Wiener schmäh.
Promiscuous figments. I get it now, yeah, man, yeah. I got to interview guitarist Mike about
Bilderbuch's new EP, their pasts and their futures, their favorite Kanye tracks. I wrote in
German, he wrote in English, it was crazy, please enjoy.

Chloe: For our readers who live under a rock, could you describe your sound?

Mike: Sublime, harsh, dope, and 70 hp strong

C: Can you briefly describe the Austrian music scene?

M: In the music business, Austria is like one of the two siblings of Germany (the other one
Switzerland.) From a creative point of view, Austria probably benefits from having a small
not-very-well-oiled music business "maschin" because, thanks to that, we hardly ever have
problems like commercialization and endless, uncreative repetition. On the other hand, as
Austrian band, it's pretty hard to get international attention, but I think we've got a pretty
good start. In any case, we're already getting asked wonderful questions outta the US. So
actually, making music is pretty cool over here in Austria.

C: What are three things you'd want an American fan to know about you?

M: 1) In Chicago, it's become a yearly summers tradition to re-enact our video "Plansch."
2) The "Polar Bear Plunge," also our invention, has become really popular in America.
3) We actually bought the Lamborghini in the "Maschin" video, but we can't afford the gas,
so now it's just sitting in my garage.

C: We've noticed how some of your older songs sound a bit different, (such as Joghurt auf
der Bluse and Ein Boot Für Uns performed at the PULS festival.) How have you guys revised
your songs, and does it feel necessary to rework them in order to keep up with the new
musical direction of the group?

M: Funnily enough, I haven't listened to the older songs all that much since we recorded
them. We never really arranged them differently, so I suppose the songs and the way we
play them have simply changed over the years. But it could also be our new drummer's fault.
Altogether, I can say we like to keep things fresh at our concerts and that of course the new
songs have got to fit in with the old ones; but I think they do quite good, even without a new,
thought-over concept.

C: If I am not mistaken, you guys have been in school and university for much of your time
playing music. How was your experience as a young band finding the balance between your
studies and your music career, and did you ever feel pressure to choose one over the other?

M: If it's a matter of sink or swim, we would rather swim with the music than drown in
scripts, documents, and subject materials. In the past couple of years, we slowly moved away
from studying and got closer to our music and the band. When there was time, we covered
the bare necessities at the university, but nowadays we spend most of our time at the
Bilderbuch office.

C: To summarize another interview, at the beginning of your career as teenagers you guys wrote songs about fairy tales, since you didn't want to act like you had big insights about more "mature" topics. When did you begin to write from your own life experiences and what is your current approach to songwriting?

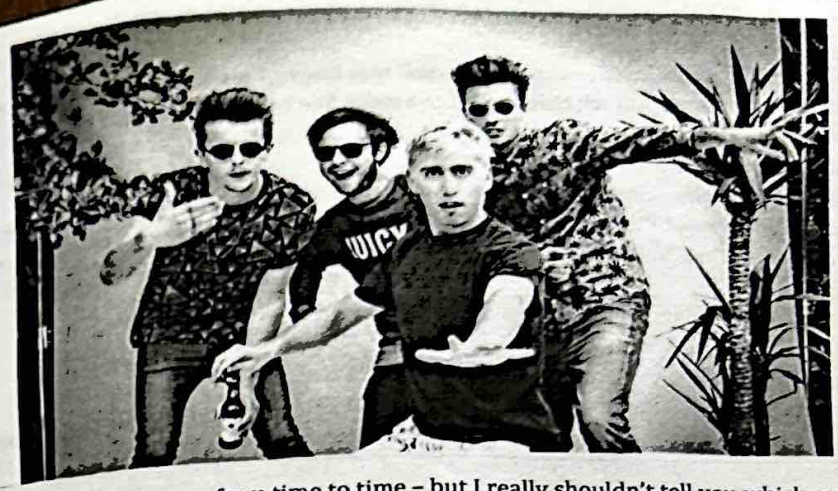
M: Sometimes there's a big idea first and then later, together with all the other puzzle pieces, there's a song. Other times you've got the whole song done, but there's something missing: that one word which suddenly brings sense to all your promiscuous figments. That one word. Maschin, plansch, whatever.

C: In general, the German media has really emphasized the "sexiness" of the "Maschin" video, which is of course true, but when I watched it for the first time, I understood it as more of a self-ironic somewhat layered critique of the portrayals of masculinity and sexuality in much pop music.[7] Soo…is there something more to the video, besides bringing a bit more sexiness into the German language music?

M: For us, this video is mainly something that just had to be done. Of course there's a bit of a blink in the eye,[6] but you can't sing your song in a Lamborghini and be totally serious about it, right? And yes, okay, lately we obviously haven't been really happy with the German music scene, but that wasn't the decisive factor for making the video in the first place. With Plansch and Maschin, we just wanted to show a little bit more of our private side. In our world, it's all about pools, cars, ice cream, and guitars.

C: Do you think that people would have responded so intensely to "Maschin" had you sung in English?

M: Actually, there've been people that told us to translate the lyrics, because then it could be a bigger hit. But I think that the only way to have healthy, persistent success in your career is to do something that comes as close to your true self as possible, and in our case, among other things, that's the German language. It would be pretty obvious self-denial if we had written our lyrics in any other language than our native one. However, we love using scraps



of English in conversation from time to time – but I really shouldn't tell you which scraps, especially not in an interview.

C: PULS recently named you guys as one of the most hyped bands of tomorrow, writing that you've conquered the German market and the next stop is America. Is that one of your current goals – to have success outside of the German-speaking world?

M: Of course, since our first concert we've wanted to take over the world – and that's still the plan, don't worry. Yeah, they called us "one of tomorrow's hype bands," but from that first concert until now, we've been a real band with real ups and real downs. The thing is, we don't look at ourselves as hype band, since the word "hype" implies a quick altitude flight and an even quicker downfall. We hope that it'll continue to be possible for us to slowly and profoundly build up things like, in this case, success and fame, considering how many bands we've seen come and go over the past eight years. Thankfully, so far we haven't been one of them, and hopefully never will be – touch wood.[8] And if one day our music is strong enough to break the boundaries of language we would be more than happy to play a show in Chicago someday.

C: American pop-culture question: What do you think of Yeezus? Do any of you guys have a favorite track?

M: At first I couldn't really relate to the "hard" touch of Kanye's new sound, but that's because at that point I had only seen the first TV appearance on SNL. I think he performed "New Slaves" and "Black Skinhead." But when I heard the whole album it all made sense to me. I've been a fan since "My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy" came out, which opened my eyes to a new, unattached, and more creative way to make music. My favorite track on the album is Bound 2. When I heard it I knew it would be a single, but I didn't know that it would come with such a cool video.

C: Can we expect a Feinste Seide video?

M: At the moment, we're actually planning on writing new stuff so I'm a little bit apprehensive of being able to put out a third video for this EP. But we'll definitely keep on making videos, it's one of the most fun and fascinating things we get to do, besides playing concerts and writing interviews in broken Austrian-English. Thank you for putting together all those questions. I hope we'll meet at a Bilderbuch show at the House of Blues in Chicago someday.

Notes:

1 - My sister Sara is the cooler version of myself that knows how to speak German and travel abroad and discover top-notch bands from overseas. She ought to get all the credit, but alas, here she is in the footnotes.

2 - Namely flailing

3- In case it wasn't immediately apparent by the opening sentence, it should be clear by now that I don't know what I'm doing or how I managed to interview these cool guys. I can only hope by "pretending" to be a crazed fan I can cover up the fact that I'm actually a crazed fan.

4 - On my birthday! I took it as a personal gesture.

5 - We even made a fan video!

6 - Several months ago, sorry gang, I was hoarding it for myself

7 – In retrospect, I'm a bit embarrassed at prefacing this question with gratuitous opinions. It feels like a pathetic cry for validation – but isn't that what we all feel when we get to pseudo-meet one of our favorite bands?

8 – I'm not sure whether this is an accurate translation of culturally distinct phrasing, shoddy craftsmanship of Google translator, or simply British-English, but I am *delighted* to add the phrases "blink of the eye" and "touch wood" to my vocabulary. Especially touch wood.

9 – Blissful and ignorant, watching the legitimate cultural references fly over my head, all I could think of when I first listened to Moon Boots were the Moon Boots Arthur Read saved up his allowance for in the PBS classic.

IMMORTAL—At the Heart of Winter

"So necro, it's kvlt... so kvlt, it's necro"

"Grimmm as fuck"

Fresh From the New Bin: DJs Review Records

Before a new CD or LP can be added to the WHPK record library, it must be reviewed by DJ, who writes their comments on a small white label affixed to its corner. Three of our most prolific music reviewers: Music Directors Charlie Rock and Andrew Fialkowski, as well as longtime DJ Mike O'Flaherty, give their thoughts on the newest additions to the "New Bin," including recent releases and reissues of older music.

CHARLIE ROCK

Shoes This High - *Straight To Hell* (Siltbreeze, 2014 - orig. recordings 1980)

Hailing from NZ, Shoes This High were barely around for more than a year--enough to release a single 7"--but this live set from 1980 captures the angst and terror that was. Equal parts punk and post-punk, Shoes This High were a fiercer Swell Maps seemingly imbued with a no-wave/industrial tendency towards unstructured chaos, and yet this set showcases an amazingly full-formed group with a menacing lead man in S. Brent Hayward. This is a great, unearthed nugget that will appeal to most of yaz.

George Brigman - *Jungle Rot* (Obscure Oxide, 2013 - orig. recordings 1975)

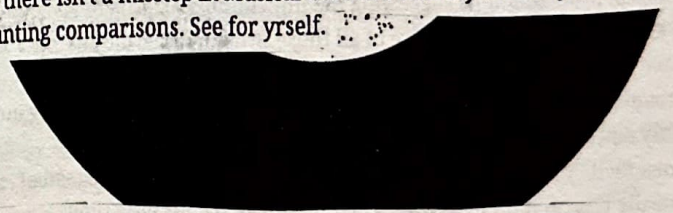
It's called 'rot' and it's all rot. The guitars are caked in sweat and filth, muffling hints of snarled perversion. It's a dark alley blues kicked into a muddled, riled scum-rock. And behind the humid churning place of identifiable disgust is the beauty of futility. As primal and putrid as Jungle Rot can be, honesty is not totally buried in the dismal, as there's another side of the record which is minimal, shimmering in the vein of Can and Skip Spence. Another amazing gem pulled back up to the surface.

ONO - *Diegesis* (Moniker, 2014)

The newfound buzz behind the second coming of these Chicago underground "noise-gospel"/post-punk/industrial masterminds has usurped the statement they made in the '80s to begin with. Amidst a clash of distorted funk, dooming metallic bass, and urban bazaar dub, stands tall your main man P. Michael who channels half-a-century of hushed political turmoil into a sermon of fragmented terrors, an unbridled submersion into the subconscious. They can take a wheezing city of blaring car horns and grinding machines and subvert it into the most ambient and reassuring aspect of their compositions. It feels like a grandiose statement and it is. Cherish these guys and the fact they're still making music this great.

The People's Temple - *Musical Garden* (HoZac, 2014)

TPT is one of the most eclectic and talented groups, in terms of musicianship, of the current psych/g-rock movement and this is their best stuff yet. I can't think of any group that so seamlessly incorporates differing sounds from the croons of early 1960s pop, to the nasally march of an Oh Sees song to acid-fried, blues-inflected, buzz-saw pop-psychedelia of late '60s groups like 13th Fl. Elevators, Electric Prunes or Moby Grape. Sure these are big targets but there isn't a misstep in Musical Garden's entirety and they deserve the daunting comparisons. See for yrself.



The Traps - *Boom Pow Awesome Wow* (CastleFace, 2014)

They're playing so loud, you can actively hear the deterioration of their equipment. The Traps were mates of Coachwhips back in the day, and man, did they play some ultra-lo-fi blown out rock (even more than Spacin'). There is such a constant anticipation of explosion, coupled with anguished howled vocals, that the inherent bluesy influence in their music could be passed right on over. Every bit of it makes you wish they had stuck around, but they'll ever be shredding madness in someone's shitty basement for 10-20 lucky people to hear.

Eagulls - *Eagulls* (Partisan, 2014)

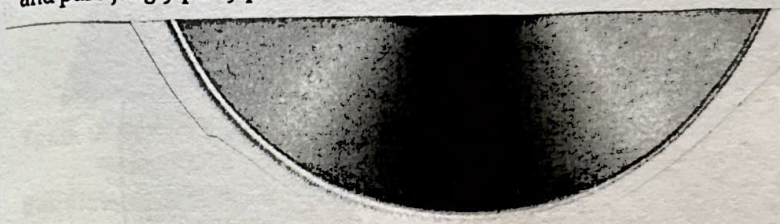
Clean, cogent post-punk in the truest form of that genre from this Leeds-based group...oozing Northern English post-industrialism, it's fairly difficult to avoid the obvious Joy Division influences (see "Hollow Visions," "Tough Luck"). Likely due to the band's four-year existence without an LP, the tracks fit together well as a cohesive work, sounding polished without compromising legitimacy for an obviously high production value. Despite some fairly classic quotables that were deemed vitriolic by the "alternative blogs" e.g. "all beach bands sucking each others' dicks and rubbing the press' clit," Eagulls appear destined for Iceage-like fame (even sounding a bit like said group if they'd formed at 27 rather than 17). Also occasionally reminiscent of former Deranged labelmates Safewords (see "Fester Blister"), one ought not be deterred by the Pitchfork-wielding hypebeasts.

Protomartyr - *Under Color Of Official Right* (Hardly Art, 2014)

Detroit's whiskey dad punks Protomartyr reproclaim their post-punk message of impending doom here with their second LP, a follow-up to the incredibly kick-ass "all passion no technique" vocalist Joe Casey, the highlight of the group, assertively mumbles through fourteen tracks that double as eschatological proclamations suggesting the impending parousia of Halens Pingree and the envelopment in fire of all those Brooklynite frontiersmen looking for a taste of real gentrification. Offering one of the more unique sounds today, Protomartyr's music, like the most seminal bands of their genre, is certainly a prohpet of industrial atrophy, unemployment, and ample abandoned factory space in which one can burn stuff. However, instead of opting for the typical Ian Curtis rip-off, Protomartyr spends little time whining, replacing that with an inebriated howl that creates one of the more impressive records of 2014. (It's not easy to to namedrop Judge Mathis and Roman execution methods within minutes of each other). Despite increased emphasis on actual singing and a departure from their markedly terse, traditional punk song structure, the message of this record is quite clear - you, like Kwame Kilpatrick - are still fucked.

Dikes of Holland - *Dikes of Holland* (Sundae, 2010)

Explosive, unhindered speedabilly garage punk debut from Austin-ites and Summer Breeze alumni Dikes of Holland...if you've not heard this, you ought to give it a spin, sounding like a fully nude Carl Perkins sprinting down 6th street amidst his own Mescaline-induced breakdown, arm-in-arm with Poison Ivy of The Cramps. It's really a can't-miss. Every track is faster than the last; each is filled with an appropriate amount of howling, hooligan sing-alongs (but not in the self-indulgent Morrissey way). And gleefully psychotic guitar breakdowns really, there's no boring track here, and all deserve to be played - if you're feeling bold, play tracks six through eight consecutively, each conveys a maniacal mix of flailing limbs, things on fire, and pure jangly party punk.



Mogwai - *Rave Tapes* (Sub Pop, 2014)

In an era in which it is no longer fashionable to make a post-rock record, Mogwai - the John to Godspeed You! Black Emperor's Peter and Tortoise's Paul, if you will - are faced with a choice on their eighth (discounting remix albums and soundtracks) soldier on or adapt. The band certainly thinks that on *Rave Tapes* they have chosen the latter. This was to be their electronic album (ironically named, no less), their answer to Tortoise's 2009 *Beacons of Ancestorship*. While the lead single off *Rave Tapes*, "Remurdered", may suggest that Mogwai has succeeded in accomplishing said goal, as often occurs, the single is not indicative of the whole effort. Instead, one hears Mogwai at their most sedentary, long removed from their head-shaven-rogue-idealogue days of the nineties. Granted, it is unreasonable to expect a group, especially one as prolific as Mogwai, to continue playing the same sort of music for 20 years...that being said, *Rave Tapes* is a highly listenable release, and there are gems throughout. "Heard About You Last Night" is ethereally catchy, and "Hexon Bogon" and "Master Card" are pure ear-bleeding epics, and almost sound like "Summer" from Tea Rapid. Check those, as well as "Remurdered," out.

Solids - *Blame Confusion* (Fat Possum, 2014)

Unrestrained, uncompromised, and most of all, loud-as-shit debut from Montrealers Solids...in a terse 38 minutes, the duo synthesizes a substantial body of influences, counting Husker Du, Dinosaur Jr., and ...And You Will Know Us By The Trail of Dead among them. This is done more than fairly well - the group maintains a hardcore mentality while incorporating the atmospheric quality of 90's slacker rock with post-hardcore instrumentation and occasional brutality (see "Over the Sirens"). However, Solids seem to have had their heads turned west - comparisons to Vancouver's Japandroids are entirely impossible to avoid. Like *Post-Nothing* if Gerhard Richter got ahold of it, *Blame Confusion* blurs along, often sounding indistinguishably similar and perturbingly familiar. That being said, this is a highly listenable debut.

Neo Boys - *Sooner or Later* (K, 2013 - orig. recordings 1978-1983)

At last the work of this pioneering Pacific Northwest punk act is issued, and I had no idea there was this much of it, or that it was this great...it has the manic choppiness and rad-political edge of similar all-female acts in the post-punk diaspora (Liliput, Au Pairs, Bush Tetras, etc.) but with an ingenuous rock-and-roll freshness and mystery very much of its region, harking back to the Fleetwoods while foreshadowing Beat Happening and Bikini Kill.

Neighborhood Brats - *No Sun No Tan* (Deranged, 2013)

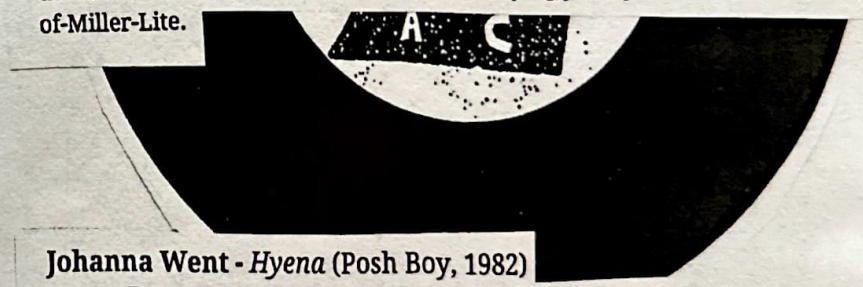
Current, female-fronted punk band in a late-'70s West-Coast style - compressed, snarling, and melodic, with serrated guitar sound and a snotty attitude...excellent stuff, with a tossed-off sensibility that actually feels really contemporary.

Body/Head - *Body/Head* (Matador, 2013)

Kim Gordon's first solo project since the simultaneous dissolution of her band and her marriage is the first Sonic Youth-related project since the mid-80s to have that sense of wild menace and possibility that kind of faded during Sonic Youth's long years of maturity/domestic bliss...atonal and devoid of verse-chorus-verse familiarity, this long, rhythmically taut guitar-storm draws its structure from Kim's personal drama, manifested here as an exorcism and the purest, most primal blues.

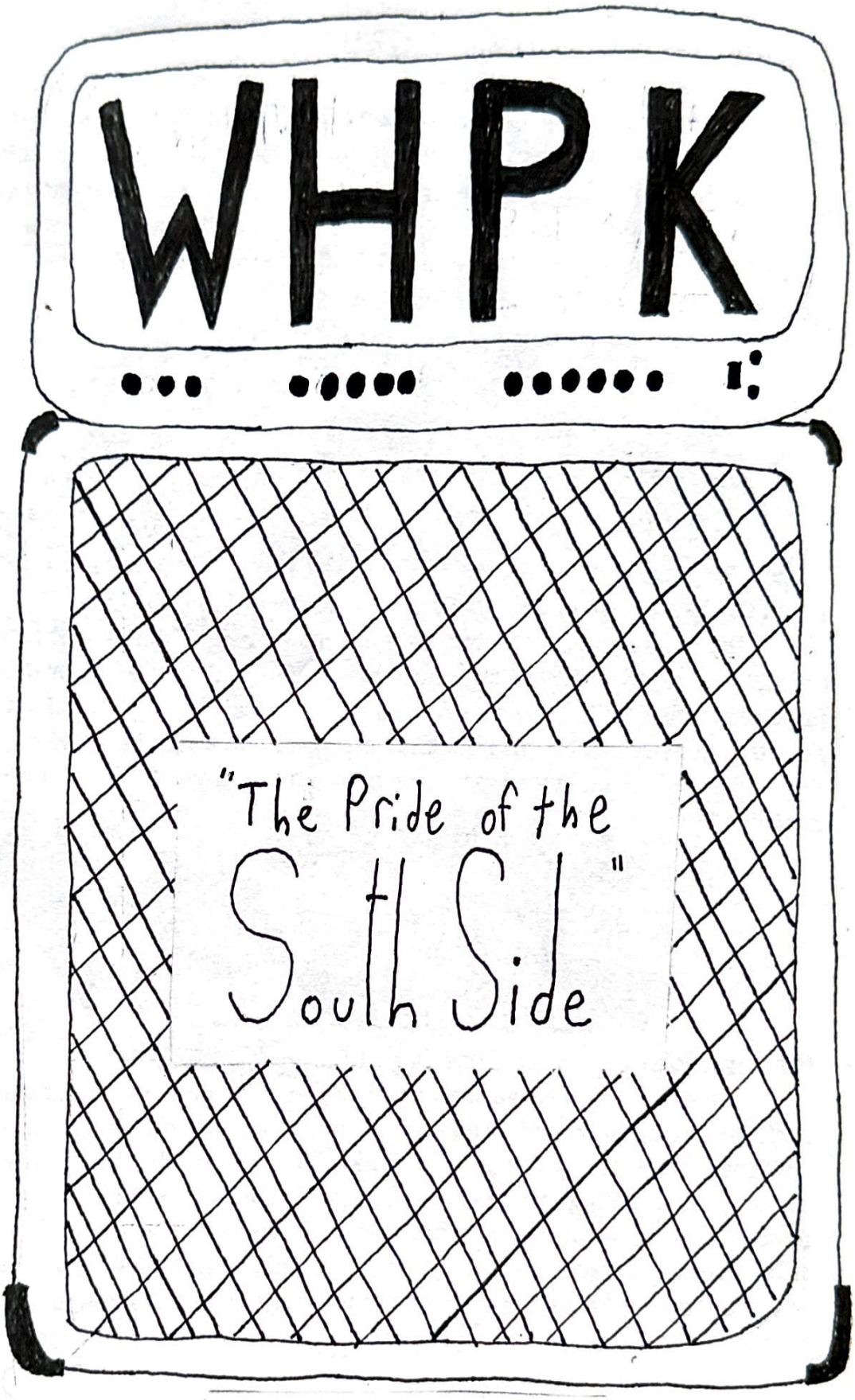
Youth Of Today - *Can't Close My Eyes* (Revelation, orig. release 1986)

Debut from these NYCers is as much of an opening shot for the second (third?) wave of SE hardcore as Minor Threat or SSD's debuts were for the first...ultra-minimalist, caroming fury that's as abstract and brutal as *Pink Flag*, though lyrical concerns here tend less to Wire's existential-dread-of-the-modern-world and more to friends-betraying-you-by-sneaking-drinks-of-Miller-Lite.



Johanna Went - *Hyena* (Posh Boy, 1982)

Damn-near uncategorizable artifact from postpunk LA...Went was a performance artist who did a lot of interesting birth/disemboweling/etc. stuff with sausages, ketchup, and what look like live worms in this one picture; the music is her ululating incomprehensible gibberish over an ultra-kinetic, tonality-defying melange of ska, hardcore, new wave, Beefheart-style skronk-rock, and pretty much anything else you could imagine...if you like James Chance and Nina Hagen but don't think they went far enough, this one's for you.



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